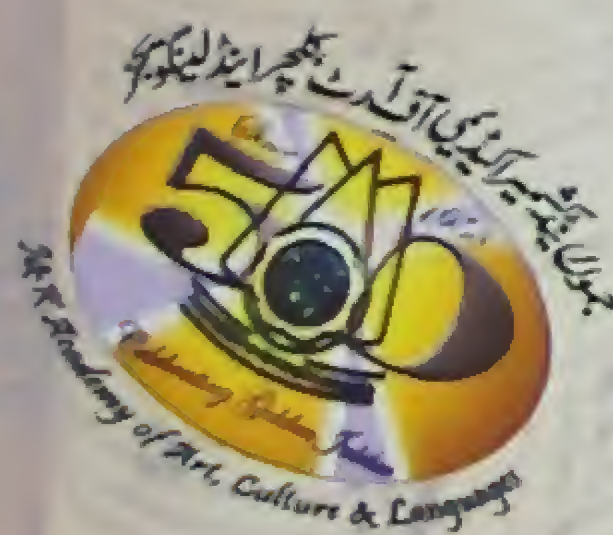


Volume
III

Number
4

Oct - Dec
2007



Sheeraza



**Jammu and Kashmir
Academy of Art, Culture and Languages**

SHEERAZA

ENGLISH

Volume III

No. 4

Oct.-Dec. 2007

Editor-in-Chief
Dr Rafeeq Masoodi (IBS)

Editor
Abid Ahmad



J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages
Srinagar / Jammu

© J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages

The contents do not necessarily reflect
the views of the Academy.

Mailing Address:

Editor English

J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages

Lal Mandi - 1, Srinagar

E-mail : mabidahmad@yahoo.com

Subscription Rate:Rs. 15.00 (Per issue)

Rs. 60.00 (Annual)

Designed by: Professional Graphics

K.U. Campus, Hazratbal, Sgr.-6

Published By:

J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages

Contents

From the Editor-in-Chief's Desk
Editorial

ARTICLES

Dogri Language : Some Salient Features	
Prof Veena Gupta	1
Kashmiri Folk Verse: A Study in Recreational Devices	
Dr Farooq Fayaz	9
India's War of Independence and Kashmiri Poetry	
Ghulam Nabi Khayal	23
Jamia Masjid Srinagar: An Architectural Masterpiece	
Majeed Aasmi	32
Historical Gurdwara of Jammu & Kashmir	
Dr Jasbir Singh Sarna	35
An Audience with HH TO Dalia Lam	
Lhundeeep Gyalpo	42
An Introduction to Dogra Culture	
Dr Shashi Pathania	45
Budhal: Hill Station of Rajouri	
K D Maini	51
Sultan Zain-ul-Abideen and Kashmir Arts & Crafts	
Syed Damsaz Ali Andrabi	57

SHORT STORY

The Cattle Pound	
Amin Kamil	63

POETRY

Dripping Town	Amin Kamil	67
About Tomorrow	Amin Kamil	69
A Poem	Janbaz Kishtwari	71
Wounds of Dawn	Prof Hamidi Kashmiri	72
Yasin	Prof Hamidi Kashmiri	73
Love	Dr Mehfooza Jan	74
I'm not alone!	Ashfaq Hussain	76
The Curse of Generations	Ashfaq Hussain	79
A Love Poem for my Son	Ashfaq Hussain	81
Anguish	Fayaz Dilber	83
The Wailing Logs	Muneeb-ur-Rehman	85
Unbaked Vessel	Satish Vimal	86
The Addict's Lament	Mahmmad Zahid	88
12 December 2007	Mohammad Zahid	89
The Residue	Parvez Ahmad Naqash	90
BOOK REVIEW	Dr Amar Malmohi	91

From the Editor-in-Chief's Desk

I am very glad that we have been able to place the 4th consecutive issue of the *Sheeraza* English in the hands of our esteemed writers. The decision to start this much needed publication was taken in view of the global reach and importance of the English language in the modern world. The decision was fraught with some uncertainties, premonitions but with some silver-linings also. Ideally we should have been flooded with the contribution from the prospective contributors but that did not happen. Still we left no stone unturned to make the publication consistent. What is now expected on part of our esteemed writers is to offer their generous contribution to continue the publication smoothly.

That the quarterly very successfully completed the first year of its publication is highly encouraging for us. However what we perceive is that we are still lacking in certain respects and topmost thing among them is to streamline the content and the print quality of the journal. What we aim at here in the Academy is nothing short of excellence and our persistent striving for that never lets us be complacent or take anything for granted.

Writers are again fervently appealed to send in their write-ups in English for inclusion in the journal to further improve the standard of the journal and to diversify its contents.

Dr Rafeeq Masoodi (IBS)
Secretary

Editorial

Cultures last long once they are written about and chronicled for posterity.

Sheeraza English is a journal that endeavours to preserve all the cultures, languages and ethnicities of the state of Jammu and Kashmir in their multiplicity by publishing articles on them.

How much have we succeeded in our mission can be gauged well from the overwhelming response that we have been receiving from writers from across the state and even from outside.

It took more than the stipulated time for this issue to see the light of the day as we have continuously been trying to make the journal truly representative of the diversity of the whole state. That sometimes makes us wait for diverse articles.

Dogra culture forms an important pillar of our multicultural state and there is an earnest need to study it more studiously. In the same vein, Dogri language is a very rich language of our state which has been included in the sixth schedule of our constitution also. There are two important articles in this issue on these topics from the two authorities on the topics.

Entertainment devices as reflected in the folklore of Kashmir makes an interesting study. One issue in this article has studied the folklore verses in the Kashmiri language from this perspective which is a very good reading.

The state of Jammu and Kashmir has a substantial population of the Sikhs, a very important community in our country. The state is having a good number of Sikh shrines with historical importance attached to them. Dr Jasbeer Singh Sarna studies some Sikh shrines from the historical point of view.

This issue contains an important section reproduced from a souvenir that has been published in Russia for a conference held recently on the musical instruments of the Central Asian region.

We hope, the readers will appreciate this issue also as the earlier issues and will keep on contributing for the journal.

Abid Ahmad

Dogri language : Some salient features

Prof Veena Gupta

Dogri, the second prominent language of J&K State has an important place on the linguistic map of northern India. It belongs to the Indo-Aryan group of Indo-European language family. It has its origin in old Indo-Aryan language i.e. language of Vedas and Laukik Sanskrit. Like other modern Indo-Aryan languages, Dogri also has passed through old Indo-Aryan (Sanskrit) and Middle Indo-Aryan (Pali, Prakrit and Apabhramsha) stages of development and entered the modern Indo-Aryan stage around the 10th century A.D. Hence it shows its three-fold process of development of its sound structure expressing its affinity with Shaurseni Prakrit. It preserves all the characteristics of all the stages of its growth from Veda's period to the present form (OIA putra > MIA putta > D puttar "son", OIA badhir > MIA bahir > D bola: "deaf", OIA mauktik > MIA mottia > D moti: "pearl", OIA daugdha > MIA duddha > D duddha "milk") and it has got regular phenomenon of phonetic change which under phonological study has been termed as:

Palatalization:

OIA nritya > D na:ch "Dance"

OIA vidyut > D bijja "Lightening"

Cerebralization:

OIA tilak D. tikka: "An ornamental or religious mark on

the forehead"

OIA trasar D.tassar "Silk"

Nasalization:

OIA mudra D.mundra "Coin"

OIA ba:hu D.ba:h "Arm"

Metathesis:

OIA Kripa: D. Kirpa: "Kindness"

OIA Ja:tak D. Ja:gat "boy"

Voiceless>Voiced

OIA Pancha D. Panja "five"

OIA Katak D. Kanda: "thorn"

OIA Canchu > D. Cunha "beak"

Un-aspirated > aspirated

OIA Pustak D. Pothi: "book"

OIA Ashta D. attha "eight"

OIA lotra D. lotha "dead body: etc."

Dogri language is spoken in mountainous and sub-mountainous regions and the adjoining plains of North West India lying between Pirpanjal and Dhauladhar ranges in North and plains of Punjab in South, river Sutlej in the East and Manawar Tawi in the West. Mainly it is spoken in Jammu province of J&K State and adjoining areas of Panjab, Himachal Pradesh and across the border in Sialkot & Shakar Ghar tehsils presently in Pakistan. This Dogri speaking region is consisted of these three main terrains (1) kandi (the sandy, Jammu Province of J&K State), (2) pahari (mountainous region of district Kathua of J&K, Chamba and Kangra of Himachal Pradesh) and (3) Plain-cum-reverine (includes southern regions of Jammu and northern parts of districts Gurdaspur and Hoshiarpur of Punjab and Sialkot and Shakargarh regions of Pakistan). These regions differ in speech from each other in pronunciation, as the

inhabitants of Pahari terrain are habitual of using syncopated grammatical forms whereas inhabitants of Kandi and plain terrains possess their own characteristics. Approximately one crore people inhabiting in these three terrains speak Dogri, but according to the census of India - 2000, the number of Dogri speakers is not available yet.

However George Grierson has recorded dialects, namely Dogri, Kandyali, Mandyali, Chambeali, Kulhuri, Bhaderwahi, Gujari, Rampuri, Pongali, Hoshiarpuri-Pahadi and Lahanda) spoken in the region of Dogri. The region known as Duggar and the word Duggar is taken as derivative of the words dvgart, dumgar, durgar, etc. but in view of law of phonetic change durgar has been taken as the most appropriate and scientific source of this word under the influence of progressive assimilation 'durgar' became 'duggar' (name of particular region), which is "a region of difficult traverse", "invincible", "difficult to be subdued" etc. The earlier mention of "durgar" occurs in Chamba Copper Plates of 11th Century A.D. and it refers to the community inhabiting the region between Ravi and Chenab.¹

The earliest reference of Dogri (duggar) is found in Nuh-Siphir, a Masnavi written by Amir Khusaro in A.D. 1317 ("Sindhi O Lahori O Kashmiri O Doggar"). Here duggar refers to the language of duggar (the country between Lahore and Kashmir). Elliot has clarified this in the Book Elliot's History of India; p.p. 563-564. In 1816 A.D. R.V. Carey has also included Dogri in the list of Indian languages for getting the missionary material translated into these languages. Later in 1867, John Beam, the founder of modern Indo Aryan Linguistics and author of "Outline of Indian Philology" acknowledged Dogri in the list of eleven languages of Aryan branch of Indo Aryan Linguistic family. In 1916, Sir George Grierson (Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. IX, Part-I) made a mention of Dogri as one of the dialects of Punjabi, perhaps on the basis of inaccurate data. After this, some more linguists like Gill and Gleason, Ujjal

Singh Bahri etc. followed Grierson's opinion regarding Dogri. Later, Dr. Siddheshwar Verma, a renowned scholar of Indian Linguistics, in his paper entitled "The place of Dogri in the languages of India" described Dogri as an independent dialect and not a dialect of any other language. He has declared it as a frontier language. He writes "of the seven families (such as Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Iranian, Tibeto-Burman, etc.) of languages in the India, the Dogri language occupies an important place philologically, for it is a frontier language and, in a way, could be classed among the frontier languages of India."² He also has described characteristics and peculiarities of Dogri in respect of independent frontier languages. Archarya Kishori Das Vajpeyi, a famous Grammarian and Linguist has also supported Dr. Verma's views in his article entitled "Dogri Bhasha Ki Ek Jhalak" (a glimpse of Dogri language). In his own words "Duggar region had its own prakrit (middle Indo-Aryan language), developed form of which is known as today's Dogri". On the basis of its independent linguistic and literary status, Dogri was recognized by Sahitya Akademi in the year 1969 and on December 22, 2003 it was included in the Eighth Schedule of Indian Constitution.

Dogri has its own script name Dogra Akkhar or Dogre and the Dogri written in this script was the official language of Jammu and Kashmir State during the reign of Maharaja Ranbir Singh (1857-1885 A.D.). The Maharaja got modified this script on the lines of Devnagari, called 'Namen Dogre' and also got some books written in this modified Dogri script. Besides, transliteration of books in other languages and script was also got done by Maharaja to popularize this modified Dogri script. But, now the present generation has adopted Devnagari script for Dogri language. As such almost all the modern Dogri literature has been and is being written in Devnagari.

As northern India has been a theater of political turmoil, turbulence and upheavals which left their deep imprint on its social and linguistic developments, hence the impact of

the foreign languages like Persian and English can be observed on its vocabulary; but the grammatical structure of Dogri is not influenced at all. The salient linguistic features of Dogri language are : (1) besides ten vowel phonemes and twenty eight consonant distinctions five supra segmental phonemes (Length, Stress, Nasalization, Tone and Juncture), phonetically 'j', 'b', and 'r' based language; initial 'j' and 'v' sounds of other languages are pronounced 'j' and 'b' respectively. Apart from retention of OIA 'r' the insertion of 'r' is also one of its peculiarities vila:p > barlap "lamentation" etc.), (3) 'a' followed by nasal sound of OIA becomes ai kanthika: > kainthi "Necklace" etc., (4) full series of five nasal phonemes n n n n and m barring retroflex nasal, four nasal occur initially also, (5) three tone phonemes (level, high-falling and low-rising), (6) five voiced aspirated stops and voiced aspirated retroflex flapped consonant (rh) are absent from the phonemic structure of Dogri, (7) passive and impersonal voices are prominent l:khea: "wrote" lakhua: "got written" etc. Here in this paper salient features in respect of supra segmental phonemes of Dogri language have been discussed.

Supra-Segmental Features

Dogri has 5 supra segmental features, i.e. Length, Stress, Nasalization, Tone and Juncture.

1. Length:

In Dogri we have ten vowels, three short vowels and seven long vowels and all the ten vowels have been individually recognized as separate phonemes so the length feature hardly has any importance to prove their phonemic status on its own basis, but as far as the question of extra long vowels is concerned length plays an important role to prove their phonemic status in word-final position by creating contrast of meaning between long vowels and extra long vowels. For example:

Long Vowels

-आ / -a /

दा / / "of"

लगा / ga / "began"

चा / / "from"

-ई / -i /

जी /j/ / "adverb of respect added
to names and designations"

बी / / "also, too"

-ऊ / -u /

कू /ku/ "root for the
verb to speak"

-ए / -e /

दे / / "marker of genitive case
used with Mas. Pl."

ले / / "took"

-ऐ / /

लै / / "have (imp.)"

-ओ / -o /

गलो / / "get melted"

Extra Long Vowel

-आऽ / -a: /

दाऽ / / "trick"

लगाऽ / /a: / "affection"

चाऽ / / "fond"

-ईऽ / -i: /

जीऽ / / "living beings, member of family"

बीऽ / / "seed"

-ऊऽ / -u: /

कूऽ /ku:/ "imperative form"

-एऽ / -e: /

देऽ / / "giant"

लेऽ / / "take" (imp.) future tense

-ऐऽ / /

लैऽ / / "rhyme"

-ओऽ / -o: /

गलोऽ / / "a kind of creeper"

On the level of consonants the feature of length is proven phonemic, e.g.

Short

कचा / / "bud" कच्चा /
 घटा / / "stratus cloud" घट्टा /
 मत / / "indication of negation"

Long

/ "unripe"
 / "dust"
 मत्त / / "sense"

मलना /	/ "to rub"	मल्लना /	/ "to encroach"
बोली /	/ "deaf fem.sg."	बोल्ली /	/ "dialect"

All these above examples prove that length in Dogri has its important role in phonetic as well as phonological structure of the language.

2. Stress:

Although stress is not a prominent feature of Dogri like English, yet sometimes it is also proven phonemic at the level of syllables. The following pairs are distinguished by means of the stress only, for example-

रला /	/ "mixture"	रली /	/ "mix" imperative
-------	-------------	-------	--------------------

In the first example, stress is on the 1st syllable/ and it means 'mixture' but in the second one stress is on the last (second) syllable, which means 'mix' in imperative sense. Similarly

Stress on 1st Syllable

Stress on 2nd Syllable

ला / tə'la/ "sole of the shoe"	तला /	/ "tank"
ला / gə'la/ "throat"	गला /	/ "say" imperative
री / də'ri / "carpet"	दरी /	/ "niece, daughter of husband's younger brother"

3. Nasalization:

Nasalization is also phonemic in Dogri and its phonemic status is established on the basis of the following oppositions:

Oral (Non Nasalized)

Nasalized

ता /	/ "heat"	तां /	/ "then"
ऐ /	/ "is"	ऐं /	/ "indication of Interrogation or surprisatation"
आ / a /	/ "come" imperative	आं /	/ "am"
आखेआ /	/ "said"	आखेआं /	/ "you should say"
भाए /	/ "get filled by some one"	भाएं /	/ "brother" in oblique form
बाह /	/ "concern"	बांह /	/ "arm"
बाग /	/ "garden"	बांग /	/ "a crow of cock"
खा /	/ "eat" imperative	खां /	/ "may I eat"

4. Tone:

The major supra-segmental feature which widely appears in Dogri phonology is Tone. Here we have many levels of Tone but three of them stand in contrastive distribution. Therefore, we can say, Dogri has three distinctive tones, namely (i) level-

tone (ii) low or low-rising tone (iii) high or high-falling tone.

The phonemic status of tone in Dogri can be established on the basis of following oppositions, when one word can have three different meanings with the help of different tones. For example –

Level Tone	High-Falling	Low-Rising
पी / / "drink" Imp.	पीह / / "grind" Imp.	प्ली / / "again"
रा / / "advice"	राह / / "way"	रहा / / "defeat"
चड़ / / "bug"	चढ़ / / "rise climb"	झड़ / / "cloudy"
राग / / "raga"	राहग / / "he will saw"	रहाग / / "he will defeat"
कोड़ा / / "whip"	कोढ़ा / / "leper"	घोड़ा / / "horse"

5. Juncture:

There is one more suprasegmental feature—Juncture

In Dogri we can recognize its existence with the following examples :-

Continuous Flow

Close-Juncture

ब'न्नना "to tie"
चराने "for grazing"
जराना "friendship"
ओहदे "his, her"

With the Pause

(Discontinuous) Open Juncture

ब'न्न - ना "please tie"
चरा - ने "we are grazing"
जरा - ना "tolerating"
ओह- दे "give that"

Juncture in Dogri has been proved phonemic on the syntactic level also. For examples:-

In continuous flow: खादधी नेई पीती (neither eaten nor drunk)
With a break after: खादधी नेई , पीती (not eaten but drunk)
Similarly, with a break after: खादधी , नेई पीती (not drunk but eaten)

Thus, on the basis of this given data, we come to the conclusion that in phonology of Dogri, supra-segmental features are of as much importance as the segmental features, in the structure of Language.

(The author teaches in the Post Graduate Department of Dogri)

Kashmiri Folk Verse : A Study in Recreational Devices

Dr Farooq Fayaz

Every society from the very beginning of the human civilization has developed distinctive *devices* to amuse and entertain itself. This innate urge of human race has never been disrupted by man made disaster or natural catastrophies. People, in every corner of the world, at different periods of history engaged themselves with folk and elite games (according to taste, economic health, climatic conditions and religious and social sanctions) to enjoy comfort and relief from superabundant worldly worries and anxieties. In Kashmir too, people adopted various devices to amuse themselves. The study attempts to focus on certain traditional devices, used by Kashmiris for collective entertainment or amusement.

A careful review of folk literature reveals that during the months extreme cold, when all passages for out door entertainment got paralyzed due to heavy snowfall, the only source of recreation left for Kashmiri people was to listen to the adventurous romantic tales of Arabian Nights, Persian tales or legendary heroes of ancient Kashmir.¹ There were professional story tellers whose services were sought to entertain the common folk, assembled together somewhere for the purpose.² This process continued for nights together until the study or tale reached its end. The professional story tellers were in great demand and they were paid both in cash and in kind. This perhaps may be

main reason why a good number of Persian epics like "Shahnama" of Firdousi and other romantic tales like Gulrez, Yousouf Zuleikha, Laila Majnu were translated into Kashmiri language.³ Stein, who compiled one of the prestigious collections of Kashmiri folk tales under the title of "Hatim's Tales" acknowledges the proficiency of one story teller Hatim Tilawani⁴ by name, from whom he heard these stories. Kashmiri village folk is said to forget their worries and agonies, caused by the corrupt revenue and police officials, and other exploiting agents, while being seated amid these recreational gatherings. In addition to the Persian oriented tales, local tales like Aka Nandun,⁵ Hemal Nagrey,⁶ Bomber Yemberzal, Zohra Khatun and Hayabund were also enjoyed by the local folk.

From the earliest times, Kashmiries had developed rich taste for theatrical performances. Professional folk performers known as Bhands⁷ or Bhagats entertained people during harvest days and on the anniversaries of Sufi saints. Their humorous dramatic performances on fairs and festivals provided ample source for common folk to entertain themselves. These Bhands performed folk plays known in Kashmiri language as "Luke Pether" in their peculiar costumes. Sources reveal that people flocked in numbers from distant places to enjoy these pethers (folk plays). These Pethers generally served two purposes, delight and information. These plays contained seemingly a source of public entertainment but inwardly these pethers acted as pointers towards the official bunglings, oppression of feudal lords and the exploiting nature of the raj collaborators.⁸ The in-depth study of these "Luke Pethers" tend to suggest that in absence of the formal communicating agencies, these 'bhands' served as reliable informants for "sarkar" by highlighting public grievances in a dramatic manner.

These bhands also exposed the exploiting devices of religious classes like Muslim Pirs and Pandit Brahmans. When the bhands would expose the machinations of any

member of corrupt officialdom or other exploiting agents, people sitting around showered abuses against the dramatic actor, taking them as the real characters. The loud laughter of village folk on comedian characters looks in fact, a great satire against every exploiting section of the society. Sir Walter Lawrence while conducting settlement work in the valley found that some of the plays enacted by the Bhands clearly depicted aggression of the ruling classes over the masses. more particularly the agriculturists. "They", states Lawrence, "relieve the sadness of village life in Kashmir.

There was another source of recreation enjoyed equally by rural and city people. It was known as Dambali.⁹ It was a combination of dance and the demonstration of martial art. The "Dambali" was preformed by a group of eight to fifteen professional damhalis known in vernacular as Dambaly Faqir or Dambaly Mety. The team of dambali performers was also received with extreme warmth and welcome. People rushed to the spot from the neighbouring villages to enjoy their dance and sling skills. Unlike Bhands, people held them in high esteem. It was believed as the tradition goes, that the performers of dambaly had been blessed with the baraka of local mystic saint. Their arrival in the courtyard was taken as a good omen by both men and women folk.

Another group of professional singers who were popularly known as shairs entertained village people particularly during harvest season. They often appeared with their rustic orchestra and began singing songs in praise of the respectable family or village elders. These shairs are said to have been in the habit of composing their topical songs on the spot. People now due to new means of recreation have lost all love and attraction for these movable entertainers. In the words of Walter Lawrence.

"The shairs must be distinguished from the Bhaggats for they never act. They are either minstrels who sing to the accompaniment of a guitar, or the village poets, who suddenly spring up in the midst of business and

recite in a loud shrill tone, the praises of the most influential person present. I knew many of these poets, and have spent many hours listening patiently to the rhymes which seemed to have no end and which jumbled up in very curious manner. It is good to give these poets a few rupees. For they are often miserable poor".¹⁰

Lari shah or Ladi shah (minstrel poet) was yet another folk entertainer. According to Prof. Mohi-ud-Din Hajini "it (Lari Shah) has proved to be a source of mental consolation for the enslaved folk during the centuries past. Lari shah dressed in a peculiar costume with dehra (small iron rod with copper rings around it) would appear in people's courtyards both in cities and villages and started reciting his literary compositions in a peculiar impressive tune on a variety of socio-political themes. He usually directed his poetic criticism against the aggressive revenue officials, religious exploiters and anti-social elements like hoarders, profiteers and black masketeers. People particularly children and women folk enjoyed his artistic company. Among other things his areas of artistic focus include multiple of natural calamities like floods, fires, droughts, famines and earthquakes. Kashmiri folk literature is fortunate enough to have rich treasure of this popular genre. Some of the important pieces of Lari Shah which had a long role to play in the process of public entertainment include among others: Bunyl Nama: Angrez Qanon, Buta Sowaqal, Mujwaza Nama, Abadrag,¹¹ etc.

The Urs days of venerated Sufi and Reshi saints¹² round the year offered great opportunity for popular rejoice and pleasure. Apart from their spiritual relevance, these served as the great spots of public jubilation and recreation. In an environ conditioned by constant gloom and despair the Urs days served as a recurring source of relief and consolation for otherwise grief stricken people of Kashmir. Since there was a self imposed restriction on Kashmiri women to visit the Mughal gardens, the only way to enjoy the outdoor

pleasure for Kashmiri women was to visit the shrines of Sufi saints on Urs days. Besides being blessed by saints, spiritual merit (as people believed) the area around the shrines was crowded with jugglers, wrestlers, bhands and other charm performers, who amused people by their professional skills, wit and common sense. The man with domesticated bear and monkey also provided enough opportunity for commoners to enjoy themselves at these social gatherings.

In Srinagar city and in major towns of the valley, Becha nagma¹³ also formed one of the major source of public jubilation. Becha Nagma marked the chief feature of Kashmir marriage once. People hired the services of Kashmiri folk chakri,¹⁴ singers, who amused people by their musical melodies and child dance. These special musical parties were arranged particularly during the night hours. Elders, muscle men and people with Sufiana temperament formed the major chunk of listeners and viewers.

During the period under survey, the "Becha Nagma" was also arranged on festive occasions in the Dungas on the waters of famous Dal Lake. The institution served as an alternative for Hafiza dance¹⁵ which was purely a domain of feudal elite and aristocracy. This is substantiated by the remarks of Florence Parbury who says that "the natives are very fond of a tamasha or fete, where they wear gorgeous clothes and sprinkle scent upon each other and in Kashmir they often celebrate great occasions by a trip on the river. On one occasion we heard the beating of drums and strains of music skimming past our house boat, and on looking out saw a boat load of men in brilliant costumes."¹⁶

For aristocracy and feudal elite there happened to be professional musical clubs run by male sex workers and prostitutes. There used to be two such main centers dealing in sensual pleasure during the period under reference. One each at 'Maisuma' and 'Tashvan in Srinagar city.¹⁷ In Anantnag district of Kashmir, near famous Achabal Mughal garden, there also existed such centre, where a small garden

is still remembered after the name of the lady manager of that recreational centre.

Among less expensive popular pastimes, mention may be made of Kwaker jang (cock fighting) Danda ledey (Bull fighting) and koter vedav (Pigeon flying). Amidst political vandalism and economic distress, commoners took active participation in these outdoor pastimes. The popularity of the dande ledey can be deduced from this Kashmiri proverb.

“Srandn Henzi Ledayi Manz Chizandan Henz
Shahmat”¹⁸

(In a fight between the two bulls the shrubs
around get damaged).

Damgal (Wrestling) was also one of the chief sources of public entertainment. The wrestlers often belonged to Gury (milk seller) families. Being in possession of well physical charm and strength, wrestlers belonging to Guri families often outshined their counterparts in the wrestling ring. In Srinagar city, according to contemporary source, the wrestling bouts were usually arranged in the Idgah ground. This wrestling bout in vernacular was known as Pehlwan Dab. Another equally important muscle oriented game, which constituted a popular means of public recreation was Lori Jang¹⁹ (sling fighting). This folk game was played in streets and lanes. Sources reveal that during these fatal fights, dozens of rival participants would receive minor or major injuries which usually resulted in community clashes. Keeping in sight the fatal nature of the play, this game has now ceased to be the part of Kashmiri sports map.

It is evident from the context of many Kashmiri folk tales that from the distant times, small girls in Kashmir amused themselves with a variety of children's games. One such game or pastime, very popular among children was known by the name of Maharini Deji (toy bride). The toy marriage like amusing exercise is vividly depicted in this song.

Hai vesiye kot sana lowkchar go!
Yi nasa phirith su mut lowakchar go

*Yaad chuyi kent gindun meharen dejen?²⁰
Shube vun lowat lowat su kat lowakchar go.*

*(O, my friend, do you ever recall our childhood days?)
I eagerly crave for its return.
Do you remember the sweet moments when we used to
Play toy bride games?
How bewitching it was our childhood!?*

(But it faded so silently and unnoticed)

Being aware of the significance of physical fitness and mental soundness, Kashmiris amid poverty and exploitation, developed more taste for cheap sports activities rather than the big and expensive sports exercises. Their liking for less time consuming folk games is suggestive of their busy working schedule. Rural people from their very childhood either worked as bonded agricultural labourers on the land of their absentee feudal lords or worked as born debt industrial labourers in the clumsy factories of wealthy karakhandars in Srinagar city. Under such inhuman conditions, how could Kashmiries have developed taste and liking for games of royal and elite nature. Our historians have altogether marginalized the significance and the relevance of these games and that is why there is no mention of these games in any of the historical narrative. These games help in understanding the socio-economic make-up and the aesthetic pulse of Kashmiri society.

The list of the folk games Kashmiries played is though very lengthy and comprehensive but here the reference may be made of only few other games played during medieval ages. These were *Eny Katar, Kath Shaley Bam, Saza Long, Garm, Okus Bokus, Yendre-Mohul, Ate Sewery Tsoori-Tehefi Lethy Kij Loth, Hiketh, Samandar, Giry Bacha etc.*²¹ These games were played exclusively by small children belonging to both the sexes. The only game referred to above which was accompanied by rustic choral signing was *Okus Bokus*.